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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506March ²⁵~~19~~, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR BRYCE HARLOW

SUBJECT: White House Staff Contacts with Soviet Bloc
Diplomatic and Other Official Representatives

Please refer to the attached memorandum of March 18, 1969, from Mr. Lee W. Huebner, reporting on conversations which took place during two recent luncheon meetings with Igor Bubnov, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy.

In keeping with established procedure, the contents of Mr. Huebner's memorandum have been made available to the FBI as of possible counterintelligence interest with respect to Bubnov.

In regard to Mr. Huebner's specific request for guidance, I have no basis at this time for anticipating that U. S. national security interests would be served by acceding to these particular contacts which Bubnov is apparently seeking to arrange. If you agree, it would appear best to meet Bubnov's future invitations with tactful refusals. I would appreciate being informed of any further approaches on the part of Bubnov.

Henry A. Kissinger

Attachment.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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MEMORANDUM

March 18, 1969

To: Dr. Henry Kissinger
Mr. A. Russell Ash

From: Lee W. Huebner

I have just been shown the memorandum which asks that all White House staff conversations with Eastern block nationals be reported to you. I submit here my report on two conversations with one Mr. Igor Bubnov, who is with the Soviet Embassy. I was not aware earlier of the request that we report plans for such meetings to you in advance, and I will certainly do that in the future if such a situation should arise. I would welcome any guidance from you as to whether or not I should accept such an invitation if one should again be proffered.

It would appear from his comments and from those of friends whom I have encountered who also have met him, that Mr. Bubnov takes some pains to maintain a wide range of contacts among people who are active in Republican Party politics. He is said to be very persistent in making these contacts and in keeping up on them.

My first meeting with Mr. Bubnov took place on February 11, 1969, at 1:00 p.m. at Dacor House, 1718 H Street, N. W. I was

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invited to lunch by Mr. Richard Beeman, an aide to Congressman James Fulton of Pennsylvania (who tells me he reported the meeting to the State Department). Beeman had met the diplomat through Mr. Fulton this summer and brought him along to the meeting. Mr. Frank Samuel, a Washington lawyer, was also present. All three Americans present had been members of the Ripon Society, and much of the conversation was spent in describing that group to Bubnov in very general terms.

Mr. Bubnov's questions of me, as I remember them now, were limited to the kind of work I did at the White House, who I work for, and so on. My answers were very general. I said that I helped to prepare light material and "color" for the President's remarks on informal occasions--an assignment which had, in fact, been my major preoccupation during that particular week. He was interested in the comparative roles of major White House staff personnel: Kissinger, Burns, Moynihan, Harlow. His remarks echoed the press speculation on that subject. I found nothing unusual in them; he appeared only to be seeking confirmation of these general impressions. I indicated--and again it was literally true--that I knew no more on such matters than I read in the papers.

There was predictable small talk about living in Washington, the Miami Beach Convention (which Bubnov had attended), and about

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his job--which he described as the regular preparation of reports on the "American scene" to Moscow so that his superiors would have a more accurate (of course, that was always the key word in his description) understanding of American attitudes and opinions. He did ask--twice, I think--about those who were handling Soviet Affairs on the new White House staff or National Security Council staff. I was unresponsive to that question, though I assume that he was aware at least of that information in this matter which had been made public.

Bubnov called me Monday, March 10, 1969, and asked that I join him for lunch at Paul Young's restaurant on March 12, 1969, at 1:00 p.m. This I did, reflecting to myself afterward that the conversation of better than $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours had been very routine. Bubnov ended the lunch, in fact, by saying that while he "enjoyed" my "company," he would also like to meet someone else from the White House, perhaps from Mr. Harlow's staff, he said, who was more of a "specialist" on "domestic" matters. He mentioned several unsuccessful attempts to get in touch with Bryce Harlow--beginning last fall. He suggested that I ask Mr. Keogh to suggest a person and then to encourage that person to accept Mr. Bubnov's invitation. This is something I have not done. I expect that Bubnov will call back on this and would appreciate any guidance you might have as to how I should respond.

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Bubnov surprised me on March 12, ~~1969~~, by asking if a White House historian had yet been hired, a reference to my remark at the first meeting that this matter could present a quandry given the Eric Goldman experience. Frankly, I did not recall discussing this one matter (it was the only such instance), and Bubnov's recollection demonstrated the care with which he had remembered the first conversation. My answer was that I did not think such a person would be hired.

Bubnov raised the subject of Mr. Packard at the Department of Defense, sketching his impression of Packard as a man of many interests and talents. I did not dispute that. If I remember correctly, he described him as a man who had broadened his outlook as he became more secure and more powerful. Bubnov asked what I had been doing lately. He began with this question--and I rather trivialized the topic as I had at the previous meeting--this time by mentioning the Proclamations on Senior Citizens Month and Small Business Week, which I had recently worked on. Something like "Boating Safety" he remarked--and I allowed as how there was a lot of routine paper work of that sort to be processed. And so it went.

Besides the strong interest in Packard, I recall only a few other specific items which may be of interest. He asked for my reading on the public temper in America: I suggested that the student unrest issue was the most important to the public right now, probably because it was at the intersection of so many

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important fears and tensions. He spoke of his interest in traveling to the Midwest and far West this spring--plans which appeared indefinite. He was unhappy, he said at this point in the talk, that he was no longer able to talk with Senator Dirksen. It seems that he once had known Dirksen but had been cut off a while back, for what Bubnov assumed were political reasons. He described an informal and brief meeting with Mr. Nixon in the 1950's--at a time when Bubnov was a translator in Moscow. He talked a bit about personality types in government, describing Kosygin as a man who was personally very kind to people who worked for him, though usually quite serious and undemonstrative. In response to my question, he said that he was asked to report to Moscow on American reactions during the Soviet-Chinese dispute and that he found the American press coverage so far to be generally "balanced."

I recall making something of a point about the favorable press coverage which both the President and the Vice President have been receiving, suggesting that the dramatic turn-around in Mr. Agnew's "image" was perhaps the more remarkable phenomenon after the problems he had last fall.

Neither conversation was very probing or vigorous, but these were the points which have "stuck" in my memory. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance in this matter.

Lee W. Huebner
Staff Assistant
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Extension 2214